

BOOK REVIEWS

Four recent texts in general botany

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A comprehensive survey of the whole field of botanical teaching in the United States would probably disclose upwards of thirty different general texts in current use. For each some special value or purpose might be advanced; e.g., adaptation for particular teaching situations and courses; predilections of teachers; tradition, etc. There are botanies designed for high school courses; others for half year college courses, etc. The present notes are not intended as an appraisal of the whole field, or as a selection of any texts as the best in the field, but merely to call attention to certain distinctive features of four volumes recently examined, and all designed for use in a year course in general college botany.

Brown, William H. The plant kingdom. Ginn & Co. 1936. \$3.50.

Dr. Brown has drawn upon his long experience in the Philippines for a great many illustrations of interest and significance which are not to be found in other texts. While the plants illustrated are often strange and unfamiliar, their relevancy to the topics justifies their use, and they constitute a feature of unusual value and interest. This volume is excellent, both for illustrations and textual materials. In respect to primitive Palaeozoic vascular plants, it is probably the most complete of the general botanies. In this connection, however, it is surprising to find the following too-broad generalization: "The structure of the Psilophytales fits in very well with the long-accepted idea that the Pteridophyta are derived from the Bryophyta."

Sinnott, E. W. Principles of botany. McGraw-Hill Co. 1935 (3rd ed.). \$3.50.

The Sinnott text is too well known to need any extended characterization. It is featured by its logical organization, the lucidity and accuracy of its statements, and by the special development of pedagogical helps, i.e., review and problem questions. Designed as a text for a "principles" course, the book is less encyclopaedic than a number of other recent volumes, a point in keeping with its general plan. It is a matter of interest

to note that Dr. Sinnott classifies all vascular plants under one phylum, the "Tracheophyta," thus dispensing with the traditional distinction between Pteridophyta and Spermatophyta. The reviewer is in accord with the view but it may seem too radical a change to some botanists.

Torrey, R. E. General botany for colleges. Appleton-Century Co. (2nd ed.) 1932. \$3.50.

The Torrey text is characterized by the originality of its point of view and design; by a more distinctive philosophy of teaching than is to be found in other botanies. The author's belief in the general significance of his subject and his enthusiasm for it are infused throughout the volume. The author's concept of "general botany" comprises (1) a survey of the general external structure and morphology of seed plants, along Asa Gray lines, (2) a consideration of the comparative anatomy, histology, and evolution of vascular plants, with "indebtedness to Prof. E. C. Jeffrey," and (3) the "evolution of the plant kingdom." Genetics is represented by a single mention of the word in one of the early pages. Torrey has preceded Sinnott in the idea of a monophyletic classification of vascular plants on the basis of the tracheid. However he uses a name, "Tracheata," less acceptable than Tracheophyta, especially since the former word already has a definite zoological significance.

The real test for such an original text would best be determined after its use, either as a regular text or as collateral reference. It seems likely, however, that students would gain a broad perspective of the field of botany. It is difficult to be sure whether this issue is a "first" or "second" edition. Apparently the 1932 issue under Appleton-Century Co. auspices has involved the reissue of the original 1925 edition of the author, plus a Preface and an Introduction.

Hill, J. B., Overholts, L. O. and Popp, H. W. Botany. McGraw-Hill Co. 1936. \$4.00.

This Penn State botany is the most compendious of the four here reviewed, and perhaps the most extensive of the general texts of American origin. Less individually distinctive in any special way than the other three here reviewed, it commends itself for its comprehensiveness of treatment. As a textbook and

as a reference work, it seems destined for widespread use. It has a fine color plate for a frontispiece, and the illustrations have been carefully chosen and prepared and are beautifully reproduced.

BROOKLYN COLLEGE, AND
BROOKLYN BOTANIC GARDEN

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

MEETING OF DECEMBER 16, 1936

The meeting was called to order by Vice-President H. A. Gleason at 3:30 P.M. at the New York Botanical Garden with 28 members present. The minutes of the meetings of November 18 and December 1 were read and adopted.

The Secretary then read the following proposed amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws which were unanimously adopted:

To amend Article III—Officers—by (1) substituting in paragraph 1 for "Secretary" the words *Recording Secretary* and *Corresponding Secretary*. (2) Inserting in paragraph 2 before "Secretary" the word *Corresponding*.

To amend Article VII—Secretary—by striking out the existing paragraph and substituting the following:

Article VII—Secretaries

The Recording Secretary shall keep full and accurate records of the membership and proceedings of the Club and Council; notify each member of his election and report to the Treasurer the name and residence of each member elected, and perform other duties of a similar nature as may be assigned by the Club from time to time.

The Corresponding Secretary shall have charge of the Charter, Seal, Constitution, By-Laws, and Records of the Club. He shall give due notice of all meetings, conduct the correspondence of the Club and prepare all letters to be written in its name, retaining copies of them. He shall serve as Chairman of the Program Committee and Exchange Committee on Publications, and perform other duties of a similar nature as may be assigned by the Club from time to time.